

CLUSTER CHARACTERISTICS

Cluster 10 is the City of Detroit's strongest residential area based on 1990 Census indicators (see Chapter 3, Asset Profile). Among the Cluster's many assets are:

- Attractive, stable residential neighborhoods with quality housing stock and rising property values
- A number of anchor institutions – among them Focus Hope and University of Detroit Mercy – which play an active role in the community
- Viable commercial areas characterized by a traditional "main street" pattern of development
- Active neighborhood organizations and committed residents

Nevertheless, Cluster 10 has a dramatic range of household incomes and neighborhood condition. As a result, stakeholders recognize the importance of planning to meet a range of housing, neighborhood commercial, transportation and human service needs.

Planning Priorities

Cluster 10's highest priority is to maintain the area's residential character, and the quality of its housing stock, while expanding the range of housing opportunities available to accommodate a variety of life stages and a mix of incomes. Its second highest priority is to encourage the development of an expanded range and improved quality of neighborhood-serving commercial uses, including both smaller, specialty retailers (especially local entrepreneurs) and larger scale national chains and/or discounters. To accomplish this, stakeholders have recommended strengthening the pedestrian-oriented, "main street" character of development on Livernois by encouraging retail to consolidate in this corridor and promoting a mix of residential and civic uses. At the same time, stakeholders have identified a desirable location for a new, larger scale shopping center on Livernois at the Lodge, as well as a location for a revitalized neighborhood scale shopping center at 7 Mile and Wyoming. In addition, Cluster 10 stakeholders want a stronger voice and a more proactive role in recruiting appropriate commercial reinvestment, targeting appropriate locations and defining guidelines for the layout and appearance of new development.

As the CRS process was underway in Cluster 10, Detroit City Council approved a new retail development at West 7 Mile and Meyers which includes a Super Kmart of 140,000 square feet and two freestanding restaurants on a 13-acre site within 100 feet of facing homes. The project has received mixed reviews throughout the City and organized

Executive Summary

resistance from neighboring residents. The Super Kmart project highlights the need for early involvement of residents in the decision-making process concerning development in their neighborhoods. For many Cluster 10 stakeholders, this project is inconsistent with their recommended priorities of maintaining the Cluster's residential character; providing a range of quality housing options; improving local retail offerings and establishing community-based partnerships to promote development.

Youth and family development is the third highest priority planning topic in Cluster 10. Stakeholders are interested in building partnerships between the public schools, residents and businesses to improve the quality of the curriculum and work towards a model in which the schools serve as a focus of community activity. Stakeholders also believe that providing expanded programs and better outreach to youth and their families through partnerships with area institutions of higher education, the City and other service providers is critically important in creating and maintaining a strong community.

A clean, safe and attractive environment is also an important priority in Cluster 10. Stakeholders are eager to explore strategies through which they can assist the City in providing better enforcement of existing laws and ordinances and take over the maintenance of vacant lots. Stakeholders also support "traffic calming" on a number of streets within the Cluster to create an environment which is safer and more attractive for walking and biking as an alternative to driving.

PRIORITY

REINVESTMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Neighborhood Commercial

Diversity and Quality of Commercial Uses

Encourage an increased diversity and improved quality of neighborhood-serving commercial uses (particularly grocery and specialty food stores, restaurants and entertainment uses, home/hardware stores) to capitalize on Cluster 10 neighborhoods with high median incomes and "capture" an increasing percentage of consumer expenditures within the Cluster and the City.

Executive Summary

Cluster-based Business Development Organization

Increase the capacity of existing Cluster-based business development organizations to cooperate effectively to:

- Document the buying power/unmet market potential of the Cluster in order to recruit investors
- Work with the City to assemble land, obtain financing, capitalize on development incentives and reduce red tape to promote commercial reinvestment
- Improve code enforcement in commercial areas and revise zoning regulations to require perimeter screening to improve the appearance of commercial strips
- Expedite the transfer of city-owned vacant buildings to organizations who can re-use them productively
- Assist in marketing commercial reinvestment locations/recruiting investors
- Give Cluster stakeholders a strong voice in formulating/shaping commercial development plans/decisions for the area
- Ensure that this business development coalition works with, and is governed by, Cluster residents and business owners and addresses both neighborhood commercial and job-related development issues/initiatives.

Neighborhood Scale Commercial Development

Protect Cluster 10's strong residential character and stability by promoting reinvestment in existing "main street" style commercial areas to complement their pedestrian-oriented development character and strengthen their viability. Discourage the development of new suburban style shopping centers of more than 150,000 SF.

Housing

Reinvestment Priorities

Prioritize housing reinvestments to:

- First, maintain the stability of intact neighborhoods where housing conditions are stable or showing signs of early decline and values are relatively high.
- Second, reinforce ongoing initiatives for housing improvement that are showing signs of success.

Expanded Range of Housing Opportunities

Expand the range of housing opportunities available in Cluster 10 to accommodate a variety of life stages – from senior housing, to first time home buyer, to households with children, to renter. Provide this expanded range of housing choice without compromising the integrity of existing neighborhoods by encouraging compatibility with existing architecture in new development and by:

- including affordable rental and lower cost home purchase options across the area, as feasible, to foster a mix of incomes
- providing higher density housing (townhouses, garden apartments) as part of the re-use strategy for commercial strips which will not be a target for neighborhood commercial reinvestment

Maintenance and Code Enforcement

Improve the quality of property maintenance and work with the City to define strategies for improving code enforcement. For example:

- Provide frequent code inspection of rental properties, with stakeholders working in partnership with code enforcement officials to identify and report code violations and monitor compliance progress
- Assign specific code enforcement officers to serve the area (possibly based at the Neighborhood City Hall)
- Develop and implement strategies for reducing the number of absentee owned rental properties over time
- Provide "home buyers club" training for first time home buyers to provide assistance in successful home maintenance and repair
- Provide incentives and recognition for high quality property maintenance

Job Centers

Cluster-based Business Development Organization

Establish a Cluster-based organization (or increase the capacity of coalition of existing organizations) to work with the City to:

- assemble parcels for job-related reinvestment
- provide development/investment incentives
- facilitate access to financing
- cut red tape
- market Cluster 10 as a desirable/competitive jobs location
- give residents/stakeholders a voice in job-related development planning and decisions

Executive Summary

This organization should also work with corporations and institutions already based in the area to:

- encourage job expansion
- collaborate in developing job training programs for area residents
- promote the hiring of area residents
- cooperate in improving the area housing stock to provide close-to-work living opportunities for employees
- collaborate with other programs/businesses to provide affordable, quality daycare

Ensure that this business development coalition works with, and is governed by, Cluster residents and business owners and addresses both neighborhood commercial and job-related development issues/initiatives.

Job Training and Retraining

Give high priority to supporting existing, and developing new, job training and retraining centers in the Cluster to serve area and City residents by:

- supporting the expansion of Focus Hope and its training programs in skilled manufacturing trades and technology
- developing partnerships with area educational institutions and businesses to design and implement training programs, provide on-the-job apprenticeships and give job training graduates a direct link to employers/employment
- developing, and seeking funding for, training and apprenticeship programs in housing repair, rehab and new construction, working in partnership with private companies/contractors and non-profit programs (such as Habitat for Humanity)
- developing technical support programs and incubator facilities to facilitate small retail and service business start-ups

Small Business Incubator Center

Collaborate with University of Detroit Mercy to develop a university-supported small business incubator center located on the west side of Livernois and linked to U of D's Business degree program. Design this incubator center to:

Executive Summary

- provide low cost space, shared support facilities (i.e., conference rooms, clerical) and technical support to start-up office and retail businesses
- include university-related retail space (copy center; book store; etc.)
- incorporate streetscape improvements on Livernois to facilitate pedestrian crossings (boulevard cross section; cross walks; street trees; etc.)

Transportation

Transit

Improve public transit as a high priority transportation-related investment in Cluster 10.

- Maintain existing routes/service and significantly improve frequency and speed of service between the suburbs and downtown on the City's major radials (including Woodward Avenue in Cluster 10); explore the feasibility of light rail in developing an improved regional transit system.
- Expand routes/service within the Cluster to serve major educational, employment and shopping locations; encourage major employers, educational institutions and area merchants' associations to participate in funding such a local shuttle service.
- Improve lighting and provide public or emergency telephones to enhance the security of bus stops; improve bus stop maintenance.

Traffic Calming

Redesign certain residential and non-residential streets to discourage high volumes of through traffic using a range of "traffic calming" techniques (e.g., on-street parking; reduction in number of traffic lanes; boulevarding, installation of an increased number of stop signs and/or traffic signals, speed bumps). Give special attention to:

- Livernois
- 7 Mile from Wyoming to the Lodge
- the areas around schools
- Puritan, Fenkell, Dexter and Linwood
- Meyers

Executive Summary

Auto Insurance

Ask the City to take the lead in developing a city-wide strategy for reducing auto insurance rates.

- Identify and independently measure those factors which contribute to higher rates
- Reduce the incidence of those factors (e.g., unrecovered auto thefts, accident rates, roadway pavement quality)
- Ask for/increase City representation on the State Insurance Commission
- Investigate the feasibility of alternative methods for providing reduced cost insurance for City residents

Environment

Contaminated Sites; Pollution

Initiate a public education/awareness campaign to assist residents/stakeholders in recognizing, preventing, reporting and reducing environmental-problems (including air and noise pollution) within the Cluster.

- Increase enforcement capability of responsible agencies/city departments.

Dumping, Junked Cars, Vacant Lots

Strengthen City capacity to enforce existing laws and regulations designed to prevent illegal dumping and junked and inappropriately stored vehicles and to ensure maintenance of vacant lots.

- Educate stakeholders on laws and regulations through community organizations
- Increase City capacity to enforce laws and regulations; train and "deputize" stakeholders to ticket violators
- Provide equal levels of enforcement in all neighborhoods (regardless of degree of community activism)

Speed the transfer of vacant lots to adjacent property owners and/or area non-profits who can take responsibility for maintenance.

- Maintain and provide an up-to-date inventory of city-owned vacant lots.

Youth And Family Development

Multipurpose Centers

Explore sources of support for establishing a multipurpose center (using an existing recreation center, if possible) serving both youth and adults and providing a one-stop location for recreation activities, daycare, legal aid, drug and/or family counseling, parenting programs, etc.

Public Schools

Improve the quality of the public schools' educational programs/curriculaby:

- Implementing a community schools model (where the school serves as a focus of community activity before and after school hours)
- Creating an attitude of partnership between schools and area residents and businesses

Recreation

Develop/expand partnerships with local institutions of higher education to extend hours of availability for youth activity sites, expand youth programming and improve outreach. Seek funding to support expanded community use.